

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 00751 310811Z

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJ: FRAGA TALKS SPECIFICS IN THE WAKE OF ARIAS SPEECH

1. INTERIOR MINISTER AND VICE-PRESIDENT FOR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS FRAGA, IN SHORT INTERVIEWS WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH TELEVISION ON THE DAY FOLLOWING PRIME MINISTER ARIAS' SPEECH TO THE CORTES, GAVE HIS VERSION OF SOME OF THE SPECIFICS LACKING IN ARIAS' SPEECH.

2. IN ENGLAND, HE SAID, HE HAD LEARNED THAT IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS NOTHING WAS EVER SIMPLY DISMANTLED. THE METHOD WAS TO ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE AFFAIRS BY PERFECTING WHAT WAS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE. THIS METHOD THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD PREFER TO FOLLOW.

3. WHEN ASKED DIRECTLY IF THERE WOULD BE UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE ON A "ONE MAN, ONE VOTE" BASIS, FRAGA REPLIED, "CERTAINLY." THAT IS WHAT WE ARE PREPARING FOR NOW." THERE WOULD BE GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR A "LOWER HOUSE OR PARLIAMENT" IN THE SPRING OF THE COMING YEAR, FOLLOWING A REFERENDUM ON CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES LATER THIS YEAR.

4. HE REPEATED THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY COULD NOT BE AND WOULD NOT BE LEGALIZED AND CLAIMED THAT THE COMMUNIST ATTEMPTS TO TURN THE RECENT WAVE OF STRIKES IN SPAIN INTO POLARIZED

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PAGE 02 MADRID 00751 310811Z

SOCIAL AGITATION HAD FAILED. "SPAIN DESIRES TO BE GOVERNED FROM THE CENTER."

5. SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, FRAGA (AS WELL AS AREILZA) HAS PREFERRED GENERALLY TO MAKE HIS DECLARATIONS ON THE POLITICAL INTENTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN INTERVIEWS WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS. ALL THESE DECLARATIONS ARE, OF COURSE, SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED IN THE SPANISH PRESS, BUT THE TECHNIQUE PRESERVES THE OPTIC THAT ARIAS SPEAKS TO THE NATION ON SUCH MATTERS. IN THIS CASE, FRAGA HAS TRIED TO COUNTER EUROPEAN CRITICISM OF THE LACK OF SPECIFICITY IN ARIAS' ADDRESS AND TO PUSH HMS VIEW OF HOW TO GO ABOUT THE KEY METTER OF REFORM OF SPAIN'S LEGISLATIVE SYSTEM.

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